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BOOK REVIEWS.

ESSENTIALS OF THE LAW, VOLUME I. A Review of Blackstone's Commentaries, with Explanatory Notes for the Use of Students at Law. Second Edition. By Marshall D. Ewell. Pp. 867. Albany: Matthew Bender & Co., 1915.

It is an inevitable result of the "case system", followed in the great majority of American law schools, that the average law student has little time for reading legal literature other than the prescribed "cases". Lengthy treatises and text-books are no longer read diligently from cover to cover, but are merely referred to in studying phases of a particular subject. However, shorter text-books are highly desirable to students as a means of summarizing and co-ordinating legal principles, frequently vaguely comprehended from a study of cases.

The original text of Blackstone's Commentaries is not only too encyclopaedic, but is filled with too many obscure and obsolete passages to be useful to beginners in the law. This edition is admirably suited for law students, for whom it was primarily intended. The Commentaries, as originally written, have been greatly abridged. It is startling to observe that of the original introduction, section one entitled "On the Study of the Law", has been omitted "for the reason that the space can be more profitably occupied by other matter." However, most of the omissions are more in accordance with the editor's purpose of eliminating obsolete and unimportant matter. One of the best features of this edition is the "system of differentiation of the text" whereby important principles are printed in heavy-faced type, "the more important parts of the text in small pica, while matter of minor importance has been printed in brevier."

The original text of the commentaries has been supplemented with explanatory notes "for the purpose of fortifying the text by authority" and of elucidating difficult passages by defining terms and making references to text-books and leading cases. Where important changes have been made in the law since Blackstone's time, they are noted and the modern rule is stated with authorities. It is regrettable that the authorities cited frequently are the older text writers, whose works have not been recently republished. However, some attempts have been made to make the annotations up to date. For example, Blackstone's statement that "land includes not only the face of the earth, but everything under it or over it," is annotated with a reference to the right of aviation over private property.

On the whole, although this edition will be particularly valuable to those intending to practice in Illinois, because of the numerous citations of Illinois statutes and cases as illustrative of the modern law, the book will be useful to students everywhere, especially in preparing for final examinations for admission to the bar.

A. L. L.

THE LAW OF WILLS AND ADMINISTRATION OF ESTATES. By William P. Borland. Pp. iv, 723. Kansas City, Mo.: Vernon Law Book Co., 1915.

This work is an enlargement of a former treatise written by the same author, and is intended to be "the best one volume work on the subject." While the style and arrangement of the material are very commendable, yet it is entirely too local to be classed as high as the author wishes it to be. The authorities cited are mostly from the Southern and Western States, with Kansas and Missouri in the lead. In fact, one receives the impression that law of the Eastern States and England is too archaic for this progressive age.